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The U.S. and Its "One China" Policy

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ABSTRACT. *The Taiwan issue occupies a special place among the top national goals for the contemporary Chinese leadership. This issue is of particular significance since it deals with national pride, state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the unity of the PRC. Its resolution also has an applied significance – it promotes the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party and resolves some of the geopolitical difficulties China faces. While currently relying on promoting Taiwan's all-pervading economic dependency on China—although not yet excluding military invasion of the island as an option—Beijing expects to resolve the Taiwan issue by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the PRC. By using economic statecraft and exerting pressure on the world's countries and international organizations, Beijing has succeeded in narrowing Taiwan's international space, thus coming closer to the desired aim of reobtaining control of the island. Still, a crucial impediment to the resolution of the Taiwan issue is the US' support of Taiwan. This article examines the specifics of the so-called "One China" policy, a policy that the US has pursued with regard to the Taiwan issue since the 1970s. By analyzing in details the provisions of the documents that lay the basis for the "One China" policy, the author highlights the policy's enduring principles. The author emphasizes the dual character of the US' "One China" policy, which is its simultaneous efforts to promote relations with the PRC and, at the same time, to sup-*

port Taiwan. The author believes that one of the primary determinants of the US' policy towards the Taiwan issue is related to the nature of China-Taiwan relations: either conflict-based (traced throughout almost the entire history of the Taiwan problem) or peaceful (manifested in short historical segments in the first half of the 1990s and in 2008–2016). Beijing's readiness to return the island with the use of force and China's rapid accumulation of military power governs the close military ties between the US and Taiwan, including arms sales to the island. Through an analysis of the developing situation in the Taiwan Strait during three Taiwan administrations (those of Chen Shui-bian, Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ing-wen), the author demonstrates that, in the 21st century, the policy of Taiwan's leadership towards both mainland China and the issue of independence plays the defining role in the Taiwan-China-US triangle. The author concludes that changes in the fundamentals of the US' "One China" policy and the termination of Washington's support of Taiwan are highly unlikely.

KEYWORDS: U.S., China, Taiwan, "One China" policy, Taiwan issue, «core interests», military cooperation

Having ascended to the position of General Secretary of the CPC in 2013, Xi Jinping was tasked with finding answers to a large number of complex challenges facing China in the midst of its accelerat-

ed economic development and its rise in status to that of a great power with global outreach. The Taiwan problem occupies a special place among these challenges; the resolution of Taiwan issue was beyond the power of four generations of PRC leaders because of the involvement of the world's strongest state: the US.

The Taiwan problem, directly affecting the issues of state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the unity of the PRC, holds the highest place within the hierarchy of China's national interests and belongs to China's so-called "core interests"—those interests Beijing will protect at any cost and concessions on which are in principle impossible. For more than six decades, Taiwan has been implementing a defacto independent domestic and foreign policy. While China has continued to view Taiwan as one of the provinces of the mainland and re-establishing control over it as one of the top national priorities.

The formal separation of Taiwan from China and the island's *de jure* independence is an unacceptable scenario for Beijing, not only in itself, but also because its independence is capable of causing an immediate chain reaction from the separatist forces in Tibet or the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Interpreting the history of the Late and Early Republican period as a series of humiliations China suffered from foreign countries as a result of the opium wars and the unequal treaties imposed upon them (also known as the "100 years of humiliation"), Chinese leadership views the return of Taiwan as the final stage in collecting lost lands and restoring the former greatness of the Chinese nation. The return of Taiwan is the final task in the "reunification of the nation" after Hong Kong and Macau rejoined the PRC in 1997 and 1999, respectively (Klimenko, Kamennov, 2017, p. 71), and thus acquires a sacred significance for the Chinese: it represents a matter of unity for the motherland.

The modern Chinese leadership attaches great importance to resolving the Taiwan issue in light of the task to ensure the legitimacy of the CPC's power: success in the Taiwan issue would significantly contribute to strengthening the existing political regime in China, while failure or lack of progress could lead to a loss of the CPC's credibility among the population. Chinese nationalism and nationalist sentiment, expressing the desire for more decisive actions by the Chinese leadership on the Taiwan issue, have a strong influence on the political decision-making process in China. This requires the Chinese authorities to resolve the Taiwan issue as soon as possible, rather than shifting it onto the shoulders of the next generations.

And finally, Taiwan is of an extremely high geostrategic importance to China, as it opens access to ocean ports and provides channels for strategic sea communications. The accelerated industrial development in China following the launch of the policy of "reform and opening-up" has led to a strong growth in the country's need to import raw materials (especially energy resources) and export manufactured goods, mainly by sea. The difficulty of China's access to the oceans is due to the fact that along the eastern coast of China, there is a ridge of islands belonging Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines that act as a natural barrier to China entering the Pacific Ocean. The alternative sea routes used by China for transporting imported raw materials and exporting industrial goods, which travel across the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca to the Indian Ocean are considered unreliable by the Chinese leadership due to widespread piracy, ongoing territorial disputes, and the presence of coastal countries with ambiguous attitudes towards China that could potentially restrict the navigation of Chinese ships. In this regard, the return of Taiwan allows China to solve the problem of open, un-

hindered and reliable access to the oceans. Moreover, the return of Taiwan gives China control over the Taiwan Strait, through which important sea routes pass. In fact about 70% of the flow of goods from Japan and South Korea travels along these routes (Li Guanqun, 2010).

Beijing views the Taiwan problem as exclusively internal and belonging to the category of "core interests", thus it rejects any form of external interference. China maintains diplomatic relations only with those countries that recognize and strictly follow the one-China principle advocated by Beijing, which is that there is only one China in the international arena of which Taiwan is an integral part.

The Taiwan problem, traditionally occupying one of the highest ranks in the hierarchy of the PRC's national interests, has become even more accentuated in light of Xi Jinping's promulgation in 2013 of the "Chinese dream" and the task of "two centenary anniversaries" (the centenary of the formation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and the establishment of the PRC in 1949). The return of Taiwan and, accordingly, the complete reunification of China, which, according to Chinese plans, should occur peacefully based on the "one country, two systems" formula, is of fundamental importance for the realization of this "Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". At the same time, the concentration of an impressive number of short-range ballistic missiles in the coastal provinces of the PRC near the Taiwan Strait indirectly indicates that the Chinese leadership has not excluded the scenario of returning Taiwan via force. According to the US Department of Defense, about 1,200 short-range ballistic missiles are located in Chi-

na, the qualitative characteristics of which, such as accuracy, range and power of the parts, are constantly being improved¹. The right of the Chinese authorities to use military force for the return of Taiwan is legislatively enshrined in the 2005 Anti-Secession Law.

The genesis of the Taiwan issue and the United States' Involvement

The Taiwan problem appeared as a special political phenomenon in 1949, when, as a result of the civil war in China, two opposing governments defending the right to represent the interests of all Chinese people on the world stage appeared: the communist government of the newly formed state – the People's Republic of China – and the Kuomintang party led by Chiang Kai-sek, who, due to his defeat in the civil war, was forced to seek refuge in Taiwan and there establish a temporary government for the Republic of China. Washington's intervention in the Chinese domestic problem in June 1950 prevented the resolution of the political rivalry between the two governments. Then-President Truman announced the dispatch of the 7th fleet of the US Naval Forces to the Taiwan Strait with the aim of preventing the military capture of Taiwan by the PRC army². Washington continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the government of the Republic of China in Taiwan until January 1, 1979.

During these three decades, US' Taiwan policy has undergone three stages of evolution. The first stage, which began with open American intervention in the intra-Chinese problem in June 1950 and

1 Military and security developments involving the PRC. 2017. P. 31. URL: https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2017_China_Military_Power_Report.PDF (Accessed: 25.08.2017)

2 The US support for Kuomintang regime in 1950 was motivated by Beijing's alignment with the USSR and the PRC's involvement in the Korean War (Zinov'ev, 2010, p. 63).

continued until the signing of the Sino-US Mutual Defense Treaty on December 2, 1954, was characterized by the formation of a model of American participation in the China-Taiwan confrontation and the rise of the main forms of allied relations with Taiwan and their official confirmation in the form of the Mutual Defense Treaty. During the second stage, Washington fulfilled its allied obligations with respect to Taiwan during the Taiwan crises of 1954–1955, 1958, and 1962. The third stage was characterized by the search for a new model of American participation in the Taiwan problem as a result of an adjustment in US foreign policy towards China. This was driven by a desire in the 1960s, both in the United States and in China, to normalize bilateral relations in order to counter the threat of the Soviet Union. As a result of complex and lengthy US-China talks, on February 28, 1972, the Shanghai Communiqué was concluded, which was the first step towards restoring relations between the United States and China. Finally, on January 1, 1979, a second communiqué was signed, in which the United States recognized the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of all of China³.

However, after the break in diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Washington did not cease to maintain diverse informal contacts with the Taiwan administration. In essence, the country continued to be the island's guarantor of security.

After switching the diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, Washington began to pursue a so-called “one-China” policy in relation to the Taiwan issue. This policy was based on four main documents: the three joint US-China communiqués (Shanghai communiqué of February 28, 1972, the communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations from January 1, 1979, the US-China Joint Communiqué of August 17, 1982) and the Taiwan Relations Act of April 10, 1979. High-ranking officials (including the President of the United States) still point to these four documents when explaining US policy towards Taiwan and during negotiations with China.

In the three joint US-China communiqués that paved the way for the normalization of relations between the two powers, the following provisions were made concerning the American policy of “one China”:

- recognition by Washington of the government of the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China;
- the intention to maintain cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with Taiwan;
- acknowledging (rather than recognizing) the position of the PRC regarding the existence of one China and Taiwan as its constituent part;
- interest in the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue by the Chinese themselves;
- refusal to intervene in the “peaceful settlement” of the conflict between the PRC and Taiwan;

3 Leksyutina Ya. (2012) The U.S.-China relations under the conditions of the international system transformation in the beginning of the 21st century [Amerikano-kitaiskie otnosheniya v usloviyakh transformiruyushcheysya mezhdunarodnoi sistemy v nachale XXI v.]. Dr. Sc. Thesis. Saint-Petersburg. P. 172.

4 The communiqué of 1972 stated: “The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position”. The communiqué of 1979 has slightly different wording: “The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China”. Shanghai Communiqué. Joint Communiqué of the USA and the PRC. 1972. See: URL: <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/communiqué01.htm> (Accessed: 21.05.2015); Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the USA and the PRC. 1979. URL: <http://www.taiwansecurity.org/IS/Joint.htm> (Accessed: 10.02.2015).

- no intentions to interfere in the China's internal affairs, to pursue a policy of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan"⁵.

The Taiwan Relations Act of April 1979 in which Congress⁶ played a decisive role, regulated the practical issues of informal interaction between the United States and the Taiwan authorities and contained provisions for ensuring the island's security and the sale of American weapons to Taiwan. The law, in particular, expressed Washington's readiness to provide Taiwan with access to "such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability"⁷.

Regarding the issue of maintaining Taiwan's security, the provisions of the law were very vague: the law obliged the United States to assist Taiwan in ensuring its security, while providing Washington room to maneuver—to determine options for responding to various developments in the Taiwan Strait at its own discretion. Without directly pointing to the US commitment to defend Taiwan in the event of a military invasion by China, the law regarded China's potential aggression as a threat to peace and security in the region and a matter of serious concern for the United States.

Essentially, this law laid the foundations of the American policy of "strategic uncertainty" on the Taiwan issue, which was used by successive US administrations for almost four decades, beginning with Carter. "Strategic uncertainty" means the lack of clear ideas in Beijing and Taipei regarding the form, extent of and thresholds for US intervention in the event of an armed conflict in the Taiwan Strait. At

the same time, Washington gives guarantees to Taipei that it will not give up its support for the sake of building good relations with China (Trush, 2017, p. 58). According to Washington, the policy of "strategic uncertainty" is designed to keep China from using force in order to resolve the Taiwan issue and at the same time prevent Taipei from using US defense commitments to move toward independence. Washington's policy in Taiwan is guided by the aim of maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, allowing it to be changed if appropriate agreements are reached between the two sides of the conflict.

On the whole, the "one China" policy pursued by Washington since the late 1970s has been dictated, on the one hand, by the US desire to develop relations with the PRC, whose growth in economic potential and its expanding participation in world affairs only reinforce similar aspirations of Washington, and, on the other hand, its desire to protect Taiwan from military invasion as its former ally under the Treaty of 1954 and, after the island's democratization in the 1980s, the need to prevent the absorption of young Asian democracy by undemocratic China.

The widespread notions of the "Chinese threat" and the need to contain the rapidly expanding comprehensive national power of China, which is capable of challenging American world domination in the long run, play a common role in the ongoing support of Taiwan. Taiwan, possessing significant financial resources and a high technological potential, would only contribute to an even greater growth in Chinese power should it gain control. Thus, supporters of China's "containment" policy consider maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait as a way to limit the

5 Joint Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan. Joint Communiqué of the USA and the PRC. 1982. URL: <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/communiqué03.htm> (Accessed: 11.02.2015)

6 The US Congress traditionally takes pro-Taiwan stance and is very critical of the mainland China.

7 Sec.2-b; sec.3-a. Taiwan relations act 1979. URL: <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/tra02.htm> (Accessed: 15.01.2013)

further strengthening of China's power. Moreover, there are also ideas about the possibility of "playing the Taiwanese card", in other words, using Taiwan as a way to add pressure to China in matters of strategic interest to Washington. And finally, we should not forget about the strong Taiwanese lobby and various interest groups in the United States influencing the foreign policy decisions. These groups either defend Taiwanese interests, or take anti-Chinese positions.

American Policy of "One China" in the 21st Century

The "One China" policy that formed following the unwilling breach of the diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979 and that the US has followed for about four decades since the breach of the diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, is very specific and differs significantly from the Chinese understanding of the "one China" principle, as well as from other countries' policies regarding Taiwan, wherein they support official relations with China and strictly follow the letter and spirit of the "one China" principle. While formally adhering to the provisions contained in the three joint US-China communiqués, deliberately not interfering in the Sino-Taiwanese negotiation process and not encouraging the island's movement towards independence, Washington, meanwhile, continues to play the role of Taiwan's guarantor of security and provides diverse support for such security. Washington's support comes in a number of key areas: arms sales and close military cooperation in general, an exchange of visits between high-ranking officials, and assistance in expanding Taiwan's participation in international organizations. While preserving the continuity of the general contours and basic principles of its Taiwan policy, Washington, nevertheless, in different historical

periods has demonstrated an unequal level of support and development of informal contacts with the island.

The formation and implementation of the "one-China" policies by successive US administrations has been determined by a whole range of factors and circumstances: the personal preferences of the presidents, the political situation, the changing international and regional context, the needs of the developing US-China relations and, to a decisive degree, the content of the China-Taiwan interaction.

For a long time, the main determinant of US policy on the Taiwan issue was the conflicting nature of China-Taiwan relations: China's readiness to use military force to return the island and the lack of interest from the Taiwan side in uniting with the mainland determined the need for American participation.

The growing threat of a military-based solution to the Taiwan issue from China's resolution of the Taiwan issue by military means has led to a deepening and increased diversification of US-Taiwan military cooperation – a form of interaction that is absolutely unacceptable to Beijing. As a result of the Taiwan crisis of 1995–1996, when, in response to large-scale military exercises by the People's Liberation Army in the Taiwan Strait region, the United States was forced to bring in two aircraft carriers, the US-Taiwan military cooperation has significantly intensified. In the last years of Bill Clinton's presidency and the first term of George W. Bush's presidency there was a rethinking of Washington's approach to the development of military cooperation with Taiwan. Previously limited mainly to the sale of American arms to Taiwan, military cooperation began to develop in a number of other areas, such as the US-Taiwan strategic dialogue on defense issues, visits to the United States by high-ranking Taiwanese military and Department of National Defense representatives, special training programs for the

Taiwan military, US observations of Taiwanese exercises, inspections, and so on.

Military cooperation was especially intensified under George W. Bush, who assumed presidential duties with a vision of China as a "strategic rival" (Timofeev, 2016, p. 609) and with a desire to abandon the policy of "strategic uncertainty" in favor of more focused support for Taiwan. During his presidency, sales of American weapons to Taiwan increased and their composition changed – more modern types of weapons began to be sold.

Thus, in April 2001, plans were revealed to sell the largest package of weapons to Taiwan since 1992, including "Kidd" class destroyers, diesel submarines and the Orion anti-submarine patrol aircraft. An appropriate legal framework for the expansion of arms sales to Taiwan was even provided – in accordance with the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, Taiwan was given access to modern American weapons and technology along with US non-NATO military allies, such as the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia or Israel⁸. Under George W. Bush, there happened a liberalization of visits to the United States by high-ranking Taiwan military officials and representatives of the Ministry of Defense – the level and intensity of visits increased. It enabled the visits to the US of As a result, it was possible, for example, to meet with the Taiwanese military officials at the level of Minister and Deputy Minister of Defense of Taiwan and Chief of the General Staff of Taiwan. In addition, since 2001, the US military was sent to Taiwan to monitor the military exercises conducted.

Under George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the tightening in US-Taiwan mil-

itary cooperation was facilitated by the increased risks of China using force to return Taiwan, due to China's accelerated pace of military modernization, its rapidly increasing military power, the deepening gap in the military capabilities of China and Taiwan, and the growth of nationalist sentiment in Chinese society. In the 2008–2011 period alone, the US administration approved three large arms packages to Taiwan. In October 2008, plans were revealed to sell a consignment of weapons to Taiwan valued at \$6.5 billion that included Patriot PAC-3 anti-ship missiles, Apache AH-64D attack helicopters, aircraft E-2T to modify Hawkeye 2000, guided missiles, Javelin sight and launching equipment, and Harpoon Block-2 missiles. In January 2010, plans were made to sell a consignment of weapons to Taiwan worth almost \$6.4 billion (including Patriot PAC-3 anti-ship missiles, Black Hawk helicopters, Harpoon missiles) (Davydov, 2010, p. 2). In September 2011, plans were announced to sell Taiwan spare parts for military aircraft, military equipment for the modernization of F-16 A / B fighters and technical and expert support totaling \$ 5.9 billion⁹.

This was followed by a four-year pause in arms sales to Taiwan, which was probably related to Washington's concerns about the adverse effects of arms sales on the development of US-China relations and the process of normalizing China-Taiwan relations that began in 2008, as well as financial constraints imposed by the Taiwan's defense budget.

In mid-December 2015, the Obama administration approved the sale of another weapons package to Taiwan in the amount of \$1.83 billion, including two frigates with

8 Art. 1206. Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003, 2002. URL: <http://thomas.loc.gov/> (Accessed: 18.08.2017).

9 Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US – foreign military sales order II (FMSO II), 2011. URL: http://www.dscamilitary.com/PressReleases/36-b/2011/TECRO_11-34.pdf (Accessed: 13.01.2016); Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US – pilot training program, 2011. URL: http://www.dscamilitary.com/PressReleases/36-b/2011/TECRO_11-19.pdf (Accessed: 13.01.2016); Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US – retrofit of F-16A/B aircraft, 2011. URL: http://www.dscamilitary.com/PressReleases/36-b/2011/TECRO_11-39.pdf (Accessed: 13.01.2016).

guided missiles “Oliver Hazard Perry”, amphibious vehicles “AAV-7”, anti-tank missiles “Javelin” and “BGM-71F”, portable missiles “Stinger”, short-range anti-aircraft artillery systems “MK-15 Phalanx”. In total, the Obama administration approved a transfer of over \$14 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan.

As with George W. Bush, Jr., under Obama, military cooperation was not limited to the sale of weapons, but developed among other vectors. Thus, for the past few years of the Obama presidency, the number of annual events in line with the US-Taiwan military cooperation has doubled¹⁰. From 2012 to 2015, the number of US Department of Defense representatives visiting Taiwan increased from about 1,500 to about 3,200¹¹.

At the same time, while developing military cooperation with Taiwan, Washington still maintains a number of restrictions on its support. Restrictions relate primarily to the sale of offensive arms to Taiwan, visits to Taiwan by US high-ranking military officers, joint military exercises, etc.

The close US-Taiwan military cooperation and, in particular, arms sales, are viewed by Beijing as violation of the “one-China” principle and the joint US-Chinese communiqué of 1982. This communiqué contains assurances by the United States that it “does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends gradually to reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading, over a period of time, to a final resolution.” (Joint

Communiqué, 1982). Washington justifies its arms sales by the provisions of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which establishes Washington’s commitments to provide Taiwan with defensive weapons in quantities that allow Taiwan to maintain its defense (Joint Communiqué, 1982).

At the present stage, Washington is almost the only supplier of arms to Taiwan. Since the mid 1990s, Taiwan has lost all of major non-US suppliers of weapons – under the threat of economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure from China, even such large exporters as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and Israel could not resist ceasing their weapons exports.

Washington is constantly under pressure from Beijing when trying to sell weapons to Taiwan. Every time Washington announces plans to sell weapons to Taiwan, a microcrisis in US-China relations occurs, which forces successive US administrations to carefully weigh the pros and cons of approving the next weapons package.

In addition to public criticism of Washington’s actions, Beijing’s discontent usually takes on such forms as canceling previously scheduled bilateral meetings to discuss defense cooperation, suspending bilateral contacts along military lines, imposing a temporary ban on visits of US warships to the port of Hong Kong, and threatening to impose economic sanctions on American corporations involved in arms sales to Taiwan.

In addition to their close military cooperation and continued sales of American weapons to Taiwan, Beijing’s accusations that Washington has violated the “one-China” principle are related to some other aspects of US-Taiwan cooperation, for example, the visits by Taiwanese presi-

10 Testimony of Susan Thornton. 2016. URL: <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA05/20160211/104457/HHRG-114-FA05-Wstate-ThorntonS-20160211.pdf> (Accessed: 29.08.2017)

11 2016 Annual Report to Congress. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. P. 385 URL: https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Annual_Report/Chapters/Chapter%203%2C%20Section%202%20-%20China%20and%20Taiwan.pdf (Accessed: 18.08.2017)

dents to the United States since 2000 (transit stops along the route of Taiwanese presidents to their diplomatic partners in Central America). Although these visits are informal, they are often accompanied by meetings with prominent American politicians, members of Congress, media representatives, and in some cases involve public speeches.

Dynamic of China-Taiwan Interaction in the 21st Century and its influence on American policy towards Taiwan

In the 21st century, the policy of the Taiwan authorities towards mainland China and the issue of independence has begun to play a decisive role in the triangle between Taiwan, China, and the United States. Taiwan, having fully mastered the principles of democratic government by the turn of the century (Malyavin, Chen, 2012, p. 119), has become highly susceptible to a change in the political leadership of the island. The two largest political parties of the island—the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)—compete for the sympathy of the Taiwanese electorate and the right to formulate the island's policy on Taiwan's independence and developing relations with mainland China based on fundamentally different political platforms. As a result, Beijing has begun to pursue a more reactive policy that responds to the actions of the Taiwanese leadership, rather than an active one. The growth of Beijing's belligerent rhetoric

has become decisively dependent on the actions of the Taiwanese authorities.

From 2000 to 2017, there have been three presidential administrations in Taiwan: the administration of a representative of the DPP, a party traditionally advocating independence for the island, Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008), the administration of the representative of the Kuomintang party Ma Ying-jeou (2008–2016) and the current administration of a representative of the DPP Tsai Ing-wen.

During Chen Shui-bian's administration there appeared deep deterioration of relations between China and Taiwan. The contacts between the representatives of the semi-official intermediary organizations of the Taiwan Strait — the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits¹²— stopped and Beijing intensified preparations for a military solution of the Taiwan issue. Contrary to the promises he made in his inaugural speech not to take any actions that would imply a change in the status quo in the Taiwan Strait¹³, Chen Shui-bian began to purposefully push the envelope of island independence (Larin, 2006, 86).

An incomplete list of actions taken by Chen Shui-bian that destabilized the situation in the Taiwan Strait includes:

measures aimed at the mobilizing of a Taiwanese identity; a public statement that each side of the Taiwan Strait is a separate state (August 2002); the adoption of the Referendum Law (2003) and the holding of referendums; an initiative to develop a new Constitution (2004) (Polyakov, 2006, p. 32); a proposal to change the

12 Initiated in early 1990s the negotiating process between these two institutions was unilaterally terminated by Beijing in response to the statement made in 1999 by Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui when he described the cross-Straits relations as "at least special state-to-state relations".

13 Cheng Shui-Bian's 2000 inaugural assurances or "five no's" included: assurances as long as the CCP regime has no intention to use military force against Taiwan not to declare independence, not to change the national title, not to push forth the inclusion of the "state-to-state" description in the Constitution, not to promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard to the question of independence or unification, and not to abolish the Guidelines for National Unification and the National Unification Council. See: 中華民國第十任總統就職演說 [Inaugural address by the 10th ROC President]. 2000. URL: http://www.president.gov.tw/php-bin/dore2+/list.php4?_sec-tion=3 (Accessed: 10.09.2012)

names of government departments and state corporations (2004); a termination of the activities of the National Unification Council and its application of the National Unification Program (2006); announcement of the “Four Wants” of Taiwan (March 2007)¹⁴; holding a referendum on the island’s membership in the United Nations under the name “Taiwan” (2007).

In order to put pressure on the Taiwanese side and prevent a declaration of independence by the island, Beijing tightened its rhetoric on the Taiwan issue and intensified military preparations. China, in particular, increased the number of its short-range missiles in areas close to Taiwan.

In March 2005, the National People’s Congress passed the Anti-Secession Law, which sanctioned China’s use of “non-peaceful means” against Taiwan in the case of the “separation of Taiwan from China under any name and in any form as a result of separatist forces seeking Taiwan’s independence or serious incidents that could lead to the separation of Taiwan from China, or the complete exhaustion of possibilities for peaceful unification”¹⁵. Beijing also demanded Washington to exert pressure on the Taiwanese authorities.

During this period, the Taiwan issue came to the forefront of US-China interactions. Washington was forced to pay heightened attention to this issue, maintain constant contacts with the Taiwanese side in order to prevent potentially dangerous initiatives by the Taiwanese leadership, and restrain Chen Shui-bian’s aspirations for Taiwan’s independence. Washington found itself in the unenviable role of mediator between Beijing and Taipei.

At the same time, role of mediator brought Washington no benefits or any opportunity to “play the Taiwan card”, but, on the contrary, complicated relations with both sides of the conflict. Beijing, which was expecting Washington to take decisive measures to counteract the consequences of provocative initiatives instituted by Chen Shui-bian, regarded actions taken by Washington as insufficient. At the same time, the pressure exerted by the United States on the administration of Chen Shui-bian caused irritation among the Taiwanese authorities.

In general, due to the inability to maintain a constructive dialogue with Chen Shui-bian, who did not want to coordinate with American colleagues his initiatives, the course originally set by George W. Bush Jr. to strengthen contacts with Taiwan was never fully implemented by Washington. The election of Taiwan’s Kuomintang candidate in March 2008, however, fundamentally influenced the dynamics of relations between the Taiwan-China-US triangle. Ma Ying-jeou had a very different approach to developing relations with China as president than Chen Shui-bian.

In order to reduce tensions between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and search for new drivers of economic growth, Ma Ying-jeou proposed a step-by-step roadmap for establishing Sino-Taiwan relations: meeting the basic demand of the Chinese authorities to resume dialogue between the banks of the Taiwan Strait, wherein the 1992 Consensus¹⁶ is recognized; the development of economic and cultural ties between the island and the mainland; negotiating the expansion of Taiwan’s “international space” and the

14 «Four Wants» are: Taiwan wants independence, a new Constitution, development, and rectification of its name for “Taiwan”.

15 《反分裂国家法》 [Anti-Secession Law]. 2005. URL: <http://www.customs.gov.cn/publish/portal0/tab637/module18166/info38575.htm> (Accessed: 08.03.2011)

16 «The 1992 Consensus» refers to a verbal agreement believed to be made in 1992 by representatives of the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits. The agreement meant that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge there is only “one China,” with each side free to interpret what this means.

conclusion of a peaceful agreement between the two shores.

The new policy course of the Taiwanese administration was well received in Beijing (Chudodeev, 2008, p. 25). The process of normalizing bilateral relations began to rapidly develop: negotiations between representatives of the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits resumed, political contacts were rapidly established¹⁷, barriers to closer trade and economic interaction were abolished. In particular, both sides have arranged for direct regular sea and air traffic between them, agreed on the terms of tourist trips of residents of the mainland, signed a large number of cooperation agreements in a number of areas (for example, in the financial sphere, the field of postal cooperation, the field of protecting of intellectual property rights, the field of ensuring food safety, the field of medicine and health, the joint fight against crime, etc.), and began to develop educational and academic exchanges (Larin, 2014, p 317).

In June 2010, the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was concluded – a preferential trade agreement that contributed to the further expansion and deepening of bilateral trade and economic relations between China and Taiwan.

During this period, Beijing, although it did not publicly reject the possibility of using force as a solution to the Taiwan issue and did not dismantle its missiles aimed at Taiwan, it did cease its belligerent rhetoric regarding the island and sought to demonstrate its good intentions towards Taiwan, staking the resolution of the Taiwanese question on economic pressure. Ensuring the island's economic dependence on China has become a basic strategy in line

with realizing the reintegration of Taiwan.

The administration of Ma Ying-jeou was guided by the task of reducing the risk of armed invasion from China, which had increased significantly during the years of provocation by Chen Shui-bian, as well as searching for a way out of a prolonged economic recession by intensifying economic interaction with the second largest economy in the world – China.

Normalization of China-Taiwan relations allowed Washington to distance itself from the Taiwanese problem and reduce its involvement to concentrate on more important foreign policy tasks. Since the stabilization of the situation in the Taiwan Strait fully corresponded to American interests of maintaining the status quo and reducing the risk of another source of instability in the Asia-Pacific region, Washington preferred not to interfere in the normalization of Sino-Taiwan relations, especially since this temporarily removed the urgency of the Taiwan problem in the developing US-China relations, which were already burdened with a number of challenges.

However, such positive dynamics changed dramatically in 2016 as a result of Beijing's negative reaction to the election as Taiwan's president of DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen. Although she expressed an interest in preserving the status quo, she refused to recognize the 1992 Consensus, urging Beijing to continue the dialogue without setting preconditions, and declared her intention to reduce the island's economic dependence on China.

The reaction of Beijing was quite harsh. Beijing even suspended the consultations started in 2014 between the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council and the Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council (Voloshin, 2016, p. 84). Beijing has also taken a series

17 In November, 2015 in Singapore there was held the first meeting since 1949 between the leaders of the PRC and Taiwan – between Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou.

of measures aimed at limiting Taiwan's international space. In violation of the "diplomatic truce" reached by both parties in 2008, which consisted of refusing to compete for diplomatic recognition from other countries, Beijing established diplomatic relations with São Tomé and Príncipe (December 2016) and Panama (June 2017), reducing the number of Taiwanese diplomatic partners to 20 states. Under the PRC's pressure, Taiwan was also denied participation in the World Health Assembly and the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly.

Amid the worsening in Sino-Taiwan relations, the specifics of the Taiwan policy under new US president, Donald Trump, remain unclear. Trump's first initiatives demonstrated his complete lack of understanding of the fundamentals and specifics of the American "one-China" policy, and has also made it difficult for Taipei to expand its participation in regional integration processes. At the beginning of December 2016, in violation of the unspoken ban of having direct contacts with the Taiwanese leadership, Trump had a telephone conversation with the President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen. Trump's statements later clarifying his decision to answer the call by the President of Taiwan caused serious concern in Taipei, since they could be interpreted as indicating Trump's readiness to use Taiwan as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the PRC on trade issues or the North Korean issue. At the end of June 2017, the Trump administration's announcement of plans to sell \$1.42 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan were considered a very unusual proposal, given the small volume of supplies carrying a potentially high risk of complicating relations with China. A major blow to Taiwan's plans was the US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), to which Taipei had great hopes to join.

Taiwan's participation in such a large-scale integration project would help the is-

land avoid economic marginalization and political isolation, increase Taiwan's competitive position in world economic processes, provide impetus for economic growth, and also diversify Taiwan's foreign economic relations, reducing its economic dependence on China. If China succeeds in successfully realizing its promoted idea for regional integration in East Asia – the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership – the economic marginalization of Taiwan against a backdrop of deteriorating relations with Beijing is inevitable.

Conclusion

America's "One China" policy, formulated in the 1970s and designed to pave the way for the normalization of the dynamically developing US-China relations while maintaining diverse, informal contacts with Taiwan, has not lost its relevance in modern conditions. Based on the contradicting spirit of the three joint US-China communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, this policy, due to its ambiguity, allows for the sustainment of a delicate balance between the developing and deepening of US cooperation with China, a country rapidly expanding its participation in world affairs, and ensuring the security of the faithful partner of the United States, a one-time military ally, and now a successful example of democratic transition in Asia – Taiwan.

The peculiarity of the US' "one China" policy is that it is designed to take into account not only the "core interests" of China, but also the interests of the people of Taiwan, the overwhelming majority of whom do not want to unite with undemocratic China. Interested in maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait as a way to meet the national interests of the United States, Washington, on the one hand, does not support Taiwan's efforts to gain independence, and has even repeatedly op-

posed them. On the other hand, the US continues to assist the island in developing its defenses against the backdrop of China's increasing military power and prevent Taiwan's total international isolation following Beijing's pressure on countries and international organizations.

For many decades now, the United States has remained the sole guarantor of Taiwan's security and its autonomous existence from Beijing. All US administrations, regardless of their political priorities, approaches to the development of relations with China (either engagement or containment or a mix of it), or the international context in which they operated, invariably remained committed to the security of Taiwan, although they, of course, developed their own nuances in the country's Taiwan policy. It seems that Washington will continue to be guided by this basic principle, despite the pressure from Beijing.

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